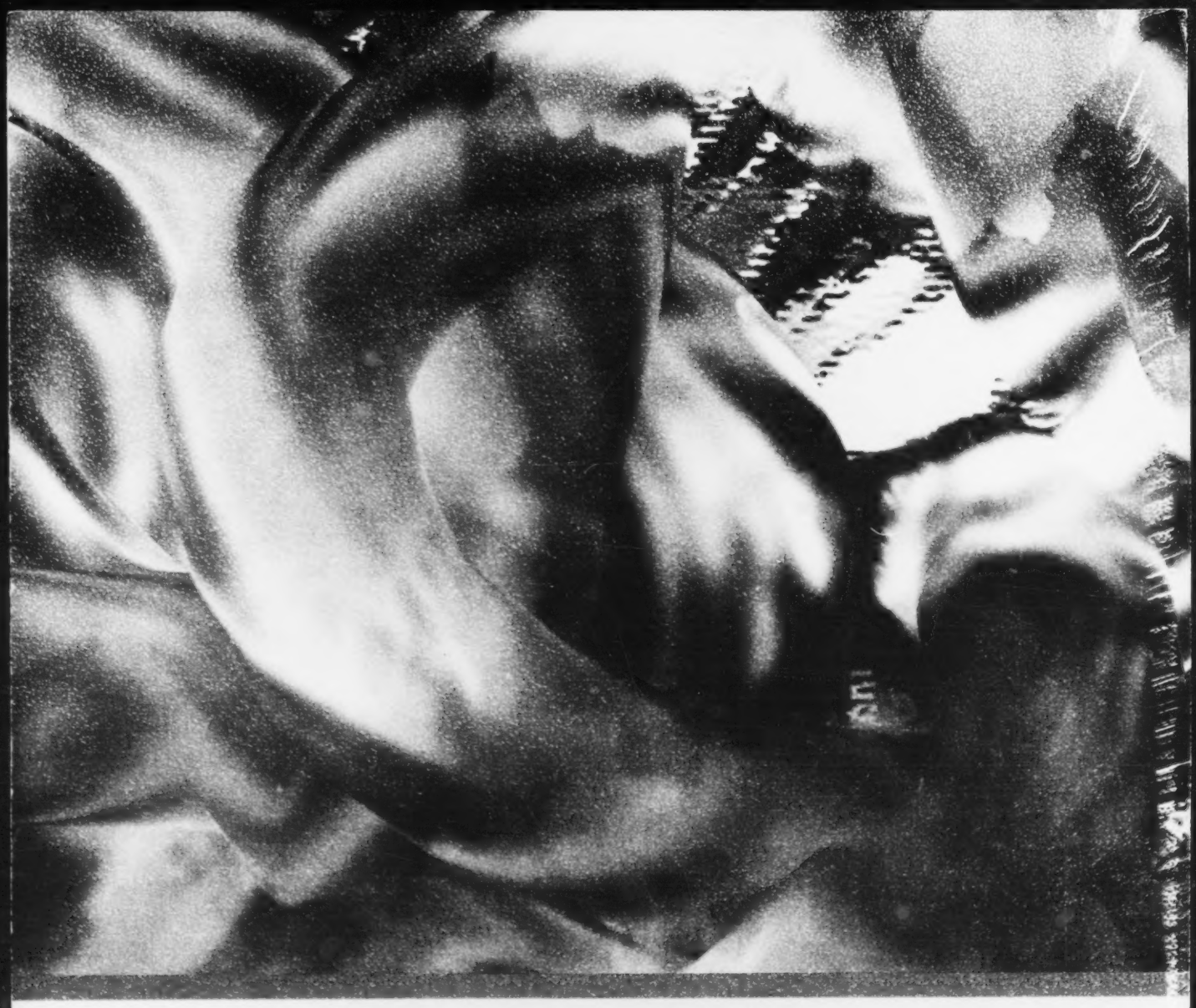

Research policy

october 2002

LE DIRECTEUR GÉNÉRAL
DES ÉLECTIONS DU QUÉBEC

Commission de la représentation électorale du Québec

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Research policy

october 2002

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INTRODUCTION

This document sets forth the research policy of the Chief Electoral Officer (DGE) and the Commission de la représentation électorale (CRE).

Québec's *Election Act* stipulates that the Chief Electoral Officer "may conduct an analysis and assessment of electoral procedures and conduct studies on the financing of political parties. After having sought the advice of the advisory committee, he may also carry out any other research he considers advisable."

The *Election Act* also mentions that the Chief Electoral Officer "shall carry out every mandate which the National Assembly entrusts to him." In the same spirit, the Act stipulates that the Commission de la représentation électorale shall also carry out any other mandate that the National Assembly, on motion of the Prime Minister, may entrust to it.

At the municipal level, the *Act respecting elections and referendums in municipalities* stipulates that the Chief Electoral Officer may conduct studies on the financing of municipal political parties and independent candidates and their election expenses.

The aim of this research policy is to provide a better framework for the research and development activities of the Chief Electoral Officer and the Commission de la représentation électorale. It establishes the guiding principles that are to orient decisions and actions in the research and development sector. It stipulates the key research themes for the next few years, by identifying the priority fields and types of research. The policy clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the various authorities concerned by research. It establishes an operating method that relies on the decompartmentalization of research activities and that fosters the emergence of a competitive spirit among personnel. Ultimately, it seeks to promote excellence and innovation in the field of electoral administration and representation in Québec.

As the person in charge of the application of the *Election Act*, the Chief Electoral Officer ensures the conformity, validity and operational nature of the procedures that he prepares or that he proposes by conducting feasibility studies and research with this goal in mind.

The research policy is henceforth part of the strategic vision of the two institutions and helps give this vision tangible form. The strategic vision of the Chief Electoral Officer reads as follows:

"Centred on his basic mission which involves being responsible for the administration of the electoral system, the Chief Electoral Officer relies on human resources that are motivated, well trained and well equipped to offer high-quality services to Quebecers.

The Chief Electoral Officer of Québec intends to channel his efforts to build, on the heritage of the past, a modern and efficient institution that serves as a model and that will be a true leader in the electoral administration field.

Excellence, impartiality, creativity and innovation will be the Institution's leitmotivs."

As for the strategic vision of the Commission de la représentation, it reads as follows:

"In carrying out its mission, which consists of ensuring the effective representation of electors, the Commission de la représentation électorale makes impartial decisions that reconcile the expectations of electors with the requirements of the Act, thus helping to increase the confidence that citizens have in the democratic system. To this end, the Commission relies on high-quality works and proven expertise.

Sharing with the Chief Electoral Officer the responsibility for guaranteeing the exercise of democratic rights, the Commission de la représentation électorale acts in close collaboration with this privileged partner."

APPROACH

This research policy is the result of an approach coordinated by the Secrétariat général, which benefited from the contribution of several staff members.

Our personnel had the opportunity to express their ideas, vision and expectations with respect to research during reflection days organized as part of the strategic planning initiative of the Chief Electoral Officer and the Commission de la représentation électorale in the fall of 2000. Members were also consulted by way of a questionnaire sent to the Steering Committee and broadly distributed.

Following the compilation and analysis of the answers to this questionnaire, key individuals from the organization were met with. They gave their opinion on the main orientations of the policy, as well as on some of its more precise aspects. Their input allowed the Secrétariat général to submit to the Steering Committee of the Chief Electoral Officer as well as to the commissioners and the chairman of the Commission, for adoption, an enriched document better rooted in the reality of the institutions.

The Steering Committee of the Chief Electoral Officer, as well as the commissioners and chairman of the Commission de la représentation électorale, adopted the research policy in June 2002.

THE MISSION AND THE ACTIVITY SECTORS OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

The Chief Electoral Officer is in charge of the administration of the electoral system with a view to ensuring the renewal of the Members of the National Assembly and, to a certain extent, that of the members of municipal councils and school boards, by guaranteeing the free exercise of the right to vote of Québec electors.

The "Chief Electoral Officer" designates both a person and an institution. The Chief Electoral Officer is a person designated by the Québec National Assembly. He is responsible for the application of the *Election Act*, the *Referendum Act* and a part of the *Act respecting elections and referendums in municipalities and of the Act respecting school elections*.

The special status of the Chief Electoral Officer at the administrative level grants the Institution full autonomy in relation to the executive branch. The fact that the Institution is not subject to the usual controls of the government in the administrative and budgetary field is an important intervention tool, as it allows him to benefit from the leeway required to better intervene when the situation so warrants. The Chief Electoral Officer is accountable to the National Assembly for his administration.

As the person in charge of the administration of provincial polls, the Chief Electoral Officer sees to the training of election officers and the updating of information found on the permanent list of electors. He also oversees the conduct of the revision, polling and, where applicable, enumeration. He issues directives for the application of the Act.

Turning to the financing of political parties and the control of election expenses, the Chief Electoral Officer authorizes parties, party authorities, independent MNAs and independent candidates to collect contributions and incur election expenses, and he verifies compliance with the provisions of the Act.

At the municipal level, the Chief Electoral Officer assumes slightly different responsibilities. While he does not administer polls directly, he does provide training and offers his support to municipal returning officers. He sees to the control of financing and election expenses in municipalities with a population of 5,000 or more. He ensures training and support for municipal treasurers, as well as for the official agents and representatives of parties and candidates. Moreover, he supervises the work of municipal treasurers. Finally, he receives and examines the financial reports and returns of election expenses.

At the school board level, the Legislator has invested the Chief Electoral Officer with powers and responsibilities similar to those that he exercises in the municipal field. The Chief Electoral Officer provides school boards that request it all the information that they need for the organization and holding of a school election poll.

In the electoral representation field, the Chief Electoral Officer provides professional and technical support to the Commission de la représentation, as the latter does not have its own staff.

Turning to information, the Chief Electoral Officer gives opinions and information on the application of the laws for which he is responsible and makes available to the public, information, reports and documents related to these laws. He maintains an information centre and organizes information sessions and symposia. He also does all advertising that he deems necessary.

To ensure the application of the laws for which he is responsible, the Chief Electoral Officer has powers of inquiry and prosecution. On his own initiative or at the request of a person, he may inquire into the application of the *Election Act*, the *Referendum Act* and certain sections or chapters of the *Act respecting elections and referendums in municipalities and of the Act respecting school elections*. Moreover, under the provisions of the *Election Act*, the Chief Electoral Officer or a person that he authorizes may institute legal proceedings. The Chief Electoral Officer's powers of inquiry and prosecution also apply at the municipal and school levels.

The aim of this research policy is to support the Chief Electoral Officer in the carrying out of his mission.

THE MISSION AND THE ACTIVITY SECTORS OF THE COMMISSION DE LA REPRÉSENTATION ÉLECTORALE

The Commission de la représentation électorale is in charge of establishing the boundaries of the electoral divisions of Québec. In addition, it oversees the application of legislative provisions relating to the establishment of municipal electoral districts and school electoral divisions.

In Québec, it is the *Election Act* that provides a framework for the electoral division delimitation process. The Commission proceeds with the delimitation of electoral divisions by respecting the principles of effective representation and the relative equal value of votes, and according to precise numerical criteria. The Commission makes sure that natural communities are respected by basing its decisions on demographical, geographical and sociological considerations. The population density, the relative growth rate of the population, the accessibility, area and shape of the region, the natural local boundaries and the territories of local municipalities are all elements that the Commission takes into account when carrying out its boundary establishment work.

At the municipal level, the Legislator has submitted to specific standards and a precise procedure the establishment of the electoral map of municipalities whose territory is divided into electoral districts. This activity is governed by the *Act respecting elections and referendums in municipalities*, which entrusts the Commission with the responsibility of approving or rejecting every electoral district division by-law when the number of electors in a district does not respect the established criteria. The Commission de la représentation électorale makes the division itself when citizens contest the boundary division by-law passed by the municipal council. Finally, the Act stipulates that the Commission must implement a boundary division by-law should a municipality fail to act.

In December 2001, the National Assembly passed Bill 59 An *Act to defer the date of the next general school election and to amend the Act respecting school elections*, entrusting the Commission de la représentation with the same responsibilities in the field of establishing the boundaries of school electoral divisions as it assumes with respect to the delimitation of municipal electoral districts.

The Commission de la représentation has a decision-making power at the provincial, municipal and school board levels. Its decisions are final and binding. This power ensures the Commission full independence in relation to all political stakeholders.

RESEARCH AT THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER AND THE COMMISSION DE LA REPRÉSENTATION ÉLECTORALE: FROM PAST TO PRESENT

The position of Président général des élections was established in 1945. The holder of this position became the first person to exclusively take care of the application of electoral legislation and the electoral administration. In 1971, the National Assembly set up the Commission permanente de la réforme des districts électoraux (CPRDE), entrusting it with responsibilities in the field of establishing the boundaries of provincial electoral divisions. In 1978 and 1979, the CPRDE was entrusted with responsibilities in the field of delimiting municipal electoral districts.

The CPRDE was replaced by the Commission de la représentation électorale (CRE) in 1979. The CRE, which has been chaired by the Chief Electoral Officer since 1983, does not have its own staff. The professional and technical support required to carry out its mandate, including that in the research field, is provided by the staff of the Chief Electoral Officer.

From 1945 to 1978, Judge François Drouin, who held the positions related to the administration of the electoral process, compiled statistics and accumulated documents pertaining to polls. His mandate was marked by this concern to compile and keep data on Québec's electoral system.

Under Pierre-F. Côté, Chief Electoral Officer from 1978 to 1997, the research function was redefined according to the evolution of the mandates and responsibilities entrusted to the Institution. Several administrative units performed research and development functions: the Service d'organisation et méthodes (Methods and organization service), the Direction de la recherche et des statistiques (Research and statistics branch), the Service du vote hors Québec et des projets spéciaux (Voting outside Québec and special projects service), the Secrétariat général (General Secretariat) and the Service de la gestion documentaire (Documentary management service).

In July 1992, the Direction de la recherche et des statistiques was done away with. Since then, no administrative unit has been exclusively dedicated to research and development activities. However, in 1993, the Secrétariat général was entrusted with the files and main mandates that had been previously assigned to the Direction de la recherche et des statistiques. Over the years, the research activities have been carried out by the Secrétariat exécutif (statistics) or the

Secrétariat général (Electoral Studies), the Direction des communications (handbook of statistics on electoral divisions or thematic files of the Service de la gestion documentaire), the Service de la division territoriale (Socioeconomic files of electoral divisions), or the Direction des enquêtes, de la législation et des projets spéciaux (comparative law).

Finally, research and development activities have been carried out by or under the responsibility of various administrative units (research on voting procedures, feasibility study on the permanent list of electors, documents related to the preparation of the electoral map and polling subdivisions, research on voting patterns, etc.).

The strategic planning initiative conducted in the fall of 2000 and the observations ensuing from the reflection days organized on that occasion confirmed the need to better define and oversee the research function at the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer and the Commission de la représentation électorale.

Convinced that the leadership of their institutions in their respective field of responsibility is based in large part on the quality of expertise, the Chief Electoral Officer and the Commission de la représentation électorale intend to make the research function a priority over the next few years.

In the research sector as in other fields of human activity, progress results from the development of knowledge. While research and development require investments in human and financial resources, they also require, and perhaps above all, a culture, an atmosphere and an environment conducive to their realization. Consequently, the Chief Electoral Officer and the Commission de la représentation électorale intend to place great importance on research and to promote innovation within their organization.

By providing guiding principles, major orientations and an operating framework, the research policy will contribute to the establishment of research priorities. It will make it possible to structure research activities according to a course of action integrated in the institutional approach as a whole.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH POLICY

In addition to supporting the Chief Electoral Officer of Québec and the Commission de la représentation électorale in the accomplishment of their respective mission and allowing them to offer Quebecers the best possible services in their fields of responsibility, this research policy has several specific objectives.

Through the types of research and the fields that it prioritizes, the policy first seeks to preserve expertise and improve know-how in the field of electoral administration and representation. Then by fostering the decompartmentalization of research activities and by banking on the complementarity of the interventions of the various stakeholders, the policy seeks to ensure that research activities are coordinated and coherent. Hence the policy contributes to better planning in this field by clarifying the roles and responsibilities with respect to research.

By defining the terms of operation in the research field, the policy promotes the establishment of a culture and a climate that are conducive to research.

Thanks to the insight provided by the results of the research carried out, the policy strives to support and guide decision-making. It contributes to the transfer of knowledge and expertise, owing to a dissemination of results and the putting in place of specific mechanisms to ensure their conservation and sustainability. Finally, the policy promotes the influence of the two institutions in Québec and beyond its borders.

The six objectives of this policy are to:

1. Maintain the expertise and improve know-how in the field of electoral administration and representation;

2. Ensure the coordination and coherency of research activities;

3. Foster the establishment of a culture and a climate conducive to research;

4. Support and guide decision-making;

5. Promote the transfer of knowledge and of the expertise of personnel in the field of electoral administration and representation;

6. Contribute to the influence of the Chief Electoral Officer and the Commission de la représentation électorale in Québec and abroad.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This research policy is based on a number of values and principles. These values and principles will guide the decisions of the Steering Committee and the commissioners, the orientations given by the Research Orientation Committee as well as the work of the staff concerned by research activities, over the next few years.

Drawing inspiration from the strategic plans (2001-2005) of the Chief Electoral Officer (DGE) and of the Commission de la représentation électorale (CRE), the policy gives priority to values associated with excellence, impartiality, creativity and innovation. By and through the ensuing works, the policy promotes these values.

Moreover, the policy is based on the following guiding principles:

- The research activities shall be related to the mission and to the mandate of the DGE and the CRE, and help them to carry out this mission and mandate;
- The studies and research carried out shall help the DGE and the CRE to improve the quality of their services;
- The research activities shall contribute to increasing the knowledge and skills of staff: these activities represent an investment in the future of both institutions;
- The DGE and the CRE shall favor studies and research that aim for tangible applications;
- The results of the research shall be available and be disseminated;
- The DGE and the CRE shall devote appropriate and sufficient resources to their research activities;
- The DGE and the CRE shall promote the establishment and maintaining of ties with outside organizations as well as partnerships with research circles.

The research activities that the Chief Electoral Officer and the Commission de la représentation électorale carry out or in which they collaborate shall respect these values and principles. In a way, they represent the backdrop for the intervention of both institutions in this sector.

CENTRAL RESEARCH THEMES

The various consultation activities that led up to this policy confirmed the convergence of very tangible concerns regarding research at the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer and the Commission de la représentation électorale.

Indeed, if reference is made to the points of view expressed during the strategic planning initiative, to the responses given to the questionnaire submitted to our staff or to the input provided during individual meetings held with certain persons who are more concerned by this question, there is a consensus in favor of research that results in tangible applications.

Moreover, under the third and final orientation of his *Strategic Plan 2001-2005*, entitled *A well affirmed leadership in the electoral administration field*, the Chief Electoral Officer defined a research theme and set an institutional objective concerning research. Indeed, the intervention theme *Emphasis on innovation and research* comprises the objective *By 2005, establish 3 research priorities and implement research activities to contribute to the Institution's progress in the electoral field.*

In its strategic plan 2001-2005, the Commission de la représentation électorale set a relatively clear orientation with respect to research. Under its first orientation, *A mission that is known, understood and whose accomplishment relies on a proven expertise for a better representation of electors*, the Commission chose the intervention theme entitled *Updated Research*, and set the following objective: *By 2005, carry out 3 theme-based research initiatives related to the mission of the Commission de la représentation électorale and ensure the dissemination of this research.*

In response to the consensus reached and to achieve the objectives set, this research policy specifies the following themes:

Types of research:

First theme: Priority given to applied research, exploratory research (research-development) and feasibility studies

Applied research consists of works using the discoveries of basic research in a given field and targeting their practical application. This type of research is interested in tangible and selective problems. Exploratory research, or research and development, is generally carried out by businesses to develop new products

or to improve existing products. As for feasibility studies, they are used to evaluate the feasibility of a project. These studies generally reveal potential or desirable scenarios as well as their implications and impacts.

Without excluding the other categories, these three types of research represent the priorities for the next few years. They appear, over the short and medium term, as being those most likely to support the Institution of the Chief Electoral Officer and that of the Commission de la représentation électorale when carrying out their respective mission. Similarly, applied research, exploratory research and feasibility studies carried out in the field of electoral administration and representation can help the Chief Electoral Officer and the Commission affirm their leadership in their field of responsibility.

Research fields:

Second theme: Priority given to research on the electoral process, the financing of political parties and electoral representation

The electoral process generally comprises the electoral procedure (election officers and their duties, registration of electors, registration of candidates, the election, corrupt practices[1]), preparations for voting, voting procedures, logistics, the use of new technologies, staffing and training.

The financing of political parties refers in particular to the avant-garde legislation that Québec has in this regard, as well as its evolution and application.

Finally, electoral representation is linked to the electoral system. It concerns the various methods of representation of electors, including the voting procedure. More specific in nature, the voting procedure consists of the manner in which the popular vote expressed during an election is transposed into the seats attributed to parties and candidates.

Based on the electoral and political environment that prevails in Québec, these research fields include the avenues taken, on the one hand, by the Chief Electoral Officer to improve his expertise and to be able to better play his advisory role with the Legislator and, on the other hand, by the Commission de la représentation électorale to carry out its responsibilities.

While these fields are priorities, they are not exclusive or restrictive. It is important to remain open and flexible with respect to the research fields that should be favored and to take into account, in the choices made, the evolution of

[1] André Bernard, La politique au Canada et au Québec, Les presses de l'Université du Québec, Montréal, 1980.

needs and recent developments in the electoral field. As electoral legislation is constantly evolving, the Chief Electoral Officer and the Commission de la représentation électorale must be able to carry out studies and research on any one of its aspects in order to be able to adequately play their role in the democratic system.

Roles of authorities:

Third theme: Clearly established responsibilities

The Steering Committee and the members of the CRE

The research mandates that have an impact on the Institution of the Chief Electoral Officer or whose importance justifies them come from the Steering Committee. As for the mandates addressed to the Commission de la représentation électorale, they come from the chairman and the commissioners.

In the case of a research mandate having an institutional scope or coming from the National Assembly, the Steering Committee and/or the members of the CRE delegate "ad hoc" collaborators from each of the units concerned according to the specific needs and the duration of a research project. The Steering Committee and/or the members of the CRE entrust the coordination of the working group to a person of their choice, specially mandated for this purpose for each of the projects.

The Steering Committee authorizes the hiring of outside consultants and researchers, as the case may be, to contribute to a research project or to carry out a research mandate. In the event that a mandate related to the mission of the Commission de la représentation électorale is entrusted to outside resources, the chairman and the commissioners approve the terms and conditions thereof.

Research mandates from the National Assembly and the Advisory Committee are handled on a priority basis with all the meticulousness and care that their accomplishment requires.

The Research Orientation Committee

To ensure the monitoring, application and evaluation of the research policy, an orientation committee made up of three to four persons and coordinated by the General Secretariat meets on a quarterly basis. This orientation committee brings together persons having the authority and experience to submit the annual research orientations to the Steering Committee.

The Research Orientation Committee sees to the coherency of the research activities carried out and makes sure that information circulates on the work carried out and the results obtained. At the request of sectoral branches, the committee issues opinions on the research projects submitted for analysis.

Research activities that have an operational character or whose realization falls on a daily basis within the usual operations of the units are not subject to systematic approval. However, out of a concern for coherency and to rationalize efforts, the information on these activities must be sent to the Research Orientation Committee.

The Secrétariat général

The Secrétariat général takes care of the coordination of work and assumes the secretariat of the Research Orientation Committee. It provides the professional and technical support required to ensure harmony between the working groups set up on an ad hoc basis, the Research Orientation Committee, the Steering Committee and, where applicable, the Commission de la représentation électorale. The Secrétariat général sees to the establishment of procedures permitting the circulation of information on research within the two institutions and the dissemination of results outside the institutions.

Administrative units

The administrative units that support both the Commission de la représentation électorale and the Chief Electoral Officer in the performance of their mandate supply the human and financial resources required to carry out the research.

In addition to providing the necessary resources and expertise, the Direction des enquêtes, de la législation et des projets spéciaux, the Direction des services à la gestion, the Direction de l'informatique and the Direction des communications ensure the technical and professional support required for the validation, production and dissemination of the research carried out by both institutions.

Finally, the Direction des opérations électorales (Electoral operations branch) the Direction du financement des partis politiques (Political party financing branch) and the Direction de la représentation électorale (Electoral representation branch) sit, with the Secrétariat général, on the Research Orientation Committee.

Operating method:

Fourth theme: A flexible organization, promoting multidisciplinarity and complementarity

New organizations, whether public or private, are open, organized in networks and rely on the circulation and sharing of information. They know how to quickly adapt to change and find solutions to problems by setting up, where necessary, high-performance work teams.

The Chief Electoral Officer and the Commission de la représentation électorale assume their responsibilities in the research field in a flexible manner, which involves an operating method based on multidisciplinarity and complementarity. They are convinced that it is possible for them to achieve their research objectives without setting up a cumbersome and costly research infrastructure. As part of their approach, they rely on the regular resources of the Chief Electoral Officer by systematizing efforts and by working in a concerted manner when carrying out research mandates.

This organization model, which the Chief Electoral Officer and the Commission de la représentation électorale adopt in relation to the research function, meets the expectations expressed during the strategic planning initiative held in 2000. This model makes it possible to avoid duplication and overlapping in the work done by the various administrative units. It allows the two institutions to go beyond sector-based interests and to turn to good account the experience and expertise of those persons most capable of taking up a challenge related to research, at a given moment in time.

CONCLUSION

This policy sets forth the guiding principles and the priorities that will orient the action of the Chief Electoral Officer and the Commission de la représentation électorale in the field of research over the next few years. It proposes a new method of organizing the research function, as well as a sharing of roles and responsibilities adapted to the reality of the two institutions. Indeed, this new operating method respects the mandate and mission of the organizations in addition to corresponding to their size and the nature of their resources.

While this policy has been devised for the medium term, i.e. approximately ten years, it will be the subject of a periodic review and evaluation. As the reality of elections is not static, it is important to re-examine on a regular basis the research priorities and the fields towards which research efforts must be directed.

The Research Orientation Committee will proceed with its evaluation every four years. The research activities listed in the annual action plans of the Chief Electoral Officer and the Commission de la représentation électorale will make it possible to achieve, to a large extent, the objectives set in this field.

SCHEDULE

GLOSSARY OF COMMON TERMS USED IN RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

GLOSSARY OF COMMON TERMS USED IN RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Abstract

A short statement about a *research report* that includes the purpose of the study, a short description of the subjects and their role as participants, and a summary of the main conclusions.

Action Research

A research method that makes the actor a researcher and the researcher an actor, that orients research towards action and that directs the action towards research considerations, while rejecting the objectivity premise of empiricism.

Applied Research

A research the prime goal of which is to find a practical application to new knowledge; a research the ultimate goal of which is the advancement of knowledge related to interventions on real objects.

According to Le Robert, applied research consists of work using the discoveries of basic research in a given field and aiming for their practical application.

Assessment Study

A pilot study that precedes the evaluation of a program in order to determine the feasibility of the evaluation study.

Basic Research

A type of research that tests *theories*, scientific laws and basic principles. Its goal is to increase knowledge without a preoccupation for practical implications. Compare to *Applied Research*. Syn.: *Fundamental Research*.

Bibliography

Work compiling for a specific period, either exhaustively or selectively, bibliographical references that may be the subject of annotations as to their content or their value.

Case Study

An extensive *research* or *evaluation study* focusing on one particular case in a study (e.g. person, family, group, community, culture).

Correlative Study

A *research* method that examines mutual relationships between at least two *variables* without the researcher actively intervening to influence these variables. Syn.: *Correlative research.*

Cost-Effectiveness Analysis

Analysis that designates the relationship existing between the effect obtained and the cost of the strategy utilized to produce it.

Cross-sectional Study

A study in which *data* are obtained from *subjects* on only one occasion in time. Comp.: *Longitudinal Study.*

Databank

A computerized index providing bibliographical data on a specific subject in a given area of knowledge (see *Bibliography* and *Computerized Search)*; also, a collection of data for a group of subjects on a certain number of variables. Syn.: *Database.*

Data Collection

The process of observing, measuring, recording and storing data provided by *subjects* on certain variables during a *research* or an *evaluation study.*

Decision Study

A study whose purpose it is to collect *data* in order to specifically make a decision on subjects tested. One could be interested, for example, in making decisions about a group of subjects concerning job selection, college admission or the relationship between two variables.

Descriptive Study

A *research* method that provides information on characteristics of persons, situations, groups, events and the relationships between them. With this approach there is no direct manipulation of the *independent variable* designed to produce experimental changes in the *dependent variable.*

Empirical Data

Data based on direct observation of a fact. See *Empiricism.*

Evaluation

The determination of the worth of an object in relation to a specific *variable*; one can evaluate persons or other things such as programs; See *Evaluation Study.*

Evaluation Study

Research that assesses the value of a practice, a product, a program, etc., in a particular circumstance and at a given place. The evaluation study involves collecting the required information, carrying out the analysis, producing the findings (see Conclusion) and submitting the recommendations. See *Evaluation.*

Evaluative Research

A research that aims to provide the information required for the statement of value judgments.

Experimental Research

An objective and systematic investigation carried out in order to explain, predict and control phenomena. The researcher manipulates the *independent variable* and observes the effect of this manipulation on the *dependent variable*. True experimental research assigns *subjects* at random to treatment and *control groups*, and has subjects pretested. Syn.: *Experimental Method.*

Field Study

A research whereby observations are made and *data* collected in the natural environment of the *subjects*. The *independent variable*(s) is (are) manipulated by the researcher.

File Review

A *data collection* method through which file documents are examined in a *research* or an *evaluation study*.

Follow-up Study

A study that obtains *data* from the same *subjects* on different occasions after a period of time.

Historical Research

The examination of past events from documents and archives. It is undertaken to explain those events and provide an interpretation in the light of the present. Syn.: *Documentary Research.* See *External Criticism* and *Internal Criticism.*

Literature Review

An in-depth, systematic and critical review of publications related to the chosen field of research. Syn.: *Search of Literature.*

Longitudinal Study

A study in which data are obtained from the same subjects on different occasions over a period of time. Comp.: *Cross-Sectional Study.*

Methodology

A set of methods and techniques used in a research or an evaluation study. Also the section of a *research report* that provides information on the methods and techniques utilized in this research or evaluation (for example characteristics of the subjects and their sampling, on the instruments used and on the procedures of data collection and data analysis).

Monograph

Set of printed sheets brought together in a volume not having any characteristic of a serial publication, and the content of which proposes to examine exhaustively a precise and relatively limited topic.

Norming Study

A study providing information to test users on the significance of an examinee's score in relation to the score distribution of a sample of individuals drawn from a specific population having taken the test.

Operationalization

Methodological process whereby a concept is defined based on the empirical observations that can be made about it; the term operational definition is also used; the empirical observations required for operationalization are called indicators and the empirical correspondence obtained is called the operational concept; operation whereby one goes from abstract language to concrete language, from the concept to the indicator.

Pilot Study

A study on a reduced scale to determine the feasibility of a full research study, to identify problems that may occur and to ensure that methods and objectives of the future research are adequate.

Program Evaluation

The evaluation of the *results* achieved by the program or its outcomes. The evaluator is also interested in the current relevance of the program and its cost-effectiveness. (see *Cost-Effectiveness Analysis).*

Pure Research

A research oriented towards solving a *problematic situation* which is not necessarily related to a practical situation (as in the case of *applied research).*

Qualitative Data

Data expressed in words rather than by numbers. They are often related to attitudes, opinions, intentions, and descriptions of cases or programs.

Qualitative Research

Research whose goal is to understand a phenomenon from the perspective of the *research subjects*; observations are described narratively, mainly with words.

Quantitative Data

Data expressed numerically.

Quantitative Research

Research whose goal is to establish relationships between *variables* and to explain observed changes in the *dependent variable* based on changes in, or following the manipulation of, the *independent variable*; the results are presented mainly with numbers.

Research

Objective search for knowledge on factual questions; problem resolution activity seeking to promote the advancement of knowledge concerning something that is directly or indirectly observable.

Research Design

The plan and structure of a study according to which *evidence* is gathered to address the *research problem*. It consists of various research strategies using control groups and independent repeated measurements of the *dependent variable* to control factors that may threaten the *internal validity* and/or the *external validity* of the research. The best known designs are those from Campbell and Stanley. See *Research Designs* 1 to 8 below.

Research Hypothesis

A formal statement that predicts relationship(s) between two or more *variables*. Consequently, it is a plausible solution to the *research problem*. Syn.: *Hypothesis, Provisional Theory*.

Research Project

A preliminary step in *research* during which the limits of the research are established and the means to achieve the various steps of the research process are specified.

Research Report

A written document on the completed *research*. It usually has the following sections: *Introduction*, *Review of Literature*, *Methodology*, *Results*, *Discussion*, *Conclusion* and *Bibliography*.

Research Subject

More specific part or facet of the research theme.

Research Theme

Part of reality (object, phenomenon or situation) that can be subject to direct or indirect observation.

Sample

A group of *subjects* chosen from a *population* to participate in a *research* or an *evaluation study*.

Scientific Method

The method of acquiring knowledge through the utilization of accepted procedures of *data collection*, classification, *analysis* and *interpretation*.

Statistical Analysis

The treatment of numerical *data* to describe, explain and predict a phenomenon, to draw *conclusions* about the relationships among *variables* or to generalize *results* from a *sample* to the parent *population*. See *Descriptive statistic* and *Inferential Statistic*.

Theoretical Framework

The description and clarification of mutual relationships between concepts studied and which are contained in a *theory*; It also includes a statement of the *research problem* and the *research hypotheses*. Syn.: *Conceptual framework*.

Validity Study

Study on the predictive value of a test that uses one or more groups of *subjects* other that the group from which the *regression equation* was obtained.

Sources: E. Richard Pigeon, PhD & Ralph Kellett, PhD. Glossary of common terms used in research and evaluation, RCMP, 2000.

Benoît Gauthier. Recherche sociale. De la problématique à la collecte des données, 2e édition, PUQ, 1992.